NEW YORK CITY'S POVERTY, HONEST AND OTHERWISE.

NEW YORK'S UNEMPLOYED AND—

In the history of New York City there has never before been such distress among workingmen and their families. Over 150,000 people, it is estimated by the State Bureau of Labor, are out of employment on Manhattan Island and the annexed district. And the list is growing constantly.

These are the people who want to work, who will do almost anything, but who are unable to find the opportunity. Their suffering is something that no one who has not gone about among them can even imagine. And for them there is no relief. Charity does not, can not, reach them. They can starve, but nothing on earth can make them beg. They want work, not alms, and there is no work. Most of them would die of hunger in the streets rather than apply to regular institutions for assistance. Of them the Charity Organization Society knows nothing. They are the "deserving poor," of which so much is written, but so little known. They have as much pride as the Fifth avenue patrician, and they bear their sufferings in silence, though incessant in their search for work.

How they live at all is a marvel. How, with no money for fuel in such bitter weather as we have had, they escape freezing to death, and, with an empty larder, they yet manage to keep body and soul together, is something difficult to understand. For these people have nothing laid by. Hard times have been grinding them down for three or four years, until the climax came last Summer and Fall. The "business revival" of which so much has been seen in the newspapers has not reached them. If it exists at all it has manifested itself outside of the ranks of the workingmen. Yet one rarely hears of a case where there has been actual death from hunger.

This is due to the fact that their neighbors help them when poverty becomes so great that starvation threatens. It is a case of the poor helping the poor.

Where the decent workingman and his wife would as soon think of stealing as of begging from the rich, they accept aid from their poor neighbors, for they know it is not charity, but friendship, and before so very long may come an opportunity to repay in kind.

This is the secret of the escape of thousands from death by hunger. Were it not for this generous, whole-souled freemasonry the list of those whom starvation would have gathered to the graveyards within the past six months would be appalling. Any one who cares to learn of the noble self-sacrifices of the poor can get all the information he desires by making a tour of the districts where workingmen live, in the overcrowded city. A reporter for the Sunday Journal made such a tour yesterday, and everywhere it was the same story—months of enforced idleness, the pawn shop, the home cleaned out and the rescue or respite from starvation through the aid of good neighbors.

James Watson lives with his wife and six children, the eldest a girl of twelve, at No. 131 Amsterdam avenue. He is an iron moulder by trade. Until the hard times came, he managed without trouble to keep up a comfortable home, for he was always sober and industrious. But ten months ago he lost his place.

"We have to shut down," his employer told him. "There is nothing doing, and we cannot afford to keep the place running."

DEATH'S HEADQUARTERS.

THERE is a block in New York where the hearse, or it may be the dead wagon, calls twice a week the year round to carry away one of the inhabitants. Of course, it is a tenement block, but even for a tenement block the record of deaths is appalling. It is doubtful if there is another similar division in all the world where the grim reaper visits as often. There certainly is none other in the United States.

This ghastly acre is bounded by Cherry, Hamilton, Catharine and Market streets. Last year there were 91 funerals within its confines. If the past counts for anything there will be as many more by January 1, 1898. For it is not the least dreadful thing about this block that from year to year its death rate varies scarcely at all. Since 1880 the number who have died in the block has never been less than 87 and never more than 93.

There are men and women who have been born there, have lived there all their lives, and now gray and wrinkled, they look with calmness of habit on the appearance of the dead wagon. One old fellow, Terence McMahon, who lives at No. 10 Hamilton street boasts that he has seen over 5,000 of his neighbors, men, women and children, carried away on their last journey.

McMahon is sixty-five years old and was born just across from the house where he now lives. When it is remembered that the average man at sixty-five probably sees less than fifty funerals among his neighbors and friends, the record of "Death's Block," as it is known, may be taken for what it is worth. Even the children in the block, those that survive, have grown callous to funerals. They see them so often that they have lost their charm. A most extraordinary condition, for next to a wedding, the average tenement house child finds nothing so interesting as a funeral.

The worst house in the block in the matter of deaths is the one in which McMahon lives, No. 10. Last year there were seven deaths in this place. There is a horrible monotony about the record of No. 10. Since 1890 it has had the undertaker within its doors exactly seven times each twelvemonth. No. 38 on the same street experienced a decided falling off last year, when only three deaths took place under its roof. In times past the number rarely fell below seven and frequently ran up to ten.

Around the Cherry street front the record is held by No. 140, a huge, dark brick front and rear tenement. Seven persons died there between January 1, 1896, and December 31, 1896. Here, too, there has been an improvement, thanks to the Health Board, as the average for some years past has been about ten, or nearly one a month.

THE POORET BLOCK IN NEW YORK.
SECOND STREET AND AVENUE B.

A DAY WITH A PROFESSIONAL BEGGAR.

This is a plain story plainly told by a detective's report to his chief. It concerns the daily life of a professional street beggar, and reveals one of the most picturesque frauds perpetrated on the public. There is about the story none of the varnish of pretty writing of the novelist. It simply sets down cold facts in the most terse form.

But of human interest it is full, despite its terseness, and there is such a great moral in it that none may fail to see. In fact, it was for the moral that the work resulting in the detective's report was undertaken. This city is so full of undeserved misery at present, there is so much honest, decent, terrible poverty that any fraud that draws away the charity of the kind-hearted can not be too loudly proclaimed. With this fact in view the detective was detailed by Superintendent A. L. Drummond, ex-Chief of the United States Secret Service, under instructions from the Journal to shadow a professional street beggar, the first to be found, for a day. He hit upon a figure familiar to all elevated railway travellers who embark and disembark at Park place—a shivering, a palsied, emaciated "cripple," who sits on the sidewalk, midway between Broadway and Church street, on the north side of Park place. And before the shadowing was finished the "cripple" was revealed as a stalwart, lithe-limbed, active young swindler, who was afflicted with nothing, except a disinclination for work. But all this is brought out in the report, and may well be led up to.

"W. R. Hearst, The Journal, New York City:

"In the matter referred by you for investigation, we have the honor to submit the following report. Operative S. W. G. reports for December 28, 1896:

"According to instructions, at 11:30 a. m. I left the office for the purpose of finding a professional beggar. After walking about the Post Office, Park Row and City Hall Park, at 12:05 p. m. I found a man sitting on the north side of Park Place who appeared to answer the purpose. He was a slender man, about twenty-five years old, five feet, three inches tall, smooth face, and looked to be suffering. His cap lay beside him, and contained one dime, two nickels and eight or ten pennies. He wore a faded cutaway coat, shabby dark trousers, no overcoat, though it was bitterly cold. On the right foot he wore an old maroon toothpick shoe; on the left foot, a broad, heavy shoe, exposing his sock, giving the foot the appearance of being greatly swollen. The leg appeared stiff and useless. Altogether he gave the impression of being badly crippled. His whole body was shaking, as though he had St. Vitus' dance. While he sat there four persons dropped something into his cap. At 12:45 p. m. he got up, apparently with great effort, and limped painfully along Park Place, crossed City Hall Park to Park Row, to New Chambers street.

He seemed hardly able to walk until he reached New Chambers street. Then his lameness and ague seemed suddenly to disappear. He walked at a rapid gait—so rapid, in fact, that I had great difficulty in following him. He no longer trembled. His hand was as steady as mine, as he borrowed a match from a man who was going along New Chambers street and lighted a cigarette which he took from a box in his pocket.

"After his cigarette was drawing freely and the box from which he had taken it was replaced in his pocket, he continued down New Chambers street. Reaching Water street, he turned to the left and entered a house at No. 344. This is a four-story brick tenement, and, while I watched for his reappearance, I saw a number of men, who looked like professional beggars, going in and out. There seemed to be a perfect nest of them, and upon inquiry, I learned that it was a sort of headquarters, where they meet to lay out routes, to prepare disguises, and to transact such other business as may come up. It is my belief that they have a perfect organization, very much after the pattern of the Paris beggars.

"It was nearly dark before the 'cripple' reappeared again. I had great difficulty in recognizing him. His appearance had undergone a complete change. He was neatly dressed, very much like a clerk out of work. On his head was a brown Fedora hat. He had on a heavy black overcoat and dark suit, good shoes.

"But the most striking feature in his new make-up was his right arm, which he carried in a white cotton sling and wooden splints. His hand was bandaged to the finger-tips. It was a perfect case of broken arm. By as direct a route as possible, and without stopping to ask for alms on the way, he walked down to the Cortlandt Street Ferry. Here he took up his stand near the gates, and whenever a boat landed its passengers he fastened himself to some benevolent-looking person—man or woman—making a pathetic appeal for help.

"He was very persistent, and would follow a person a half block if he was repulsed. He kept this up on Cortlandt street, from the ferry to Broadway, walked to Park row, occasionally "making a touch," until he reached the Brooklyn Bridge, after which he did not solicit any one. He continued on up Park Row, to James street, to Oak street, to No. 36½, which he entered at 8:05 p. m. This house is a six-story brick rookery.

"At 8:20 p. m. this man came out without any sling, splints or bandage on his arm and hand. He was going through calisthenics with his right arm, apparently to get out the stiffness that had been caused by its being bound up so long. He had made some change in his dress, and had on a clean, standing collar in place of the turn-down he had worn while at the ferry. He walked up Oak street to Catharine, to Chatham square, where he entered a saloon at No. 12 Bowery, under the Progress Lodging House.

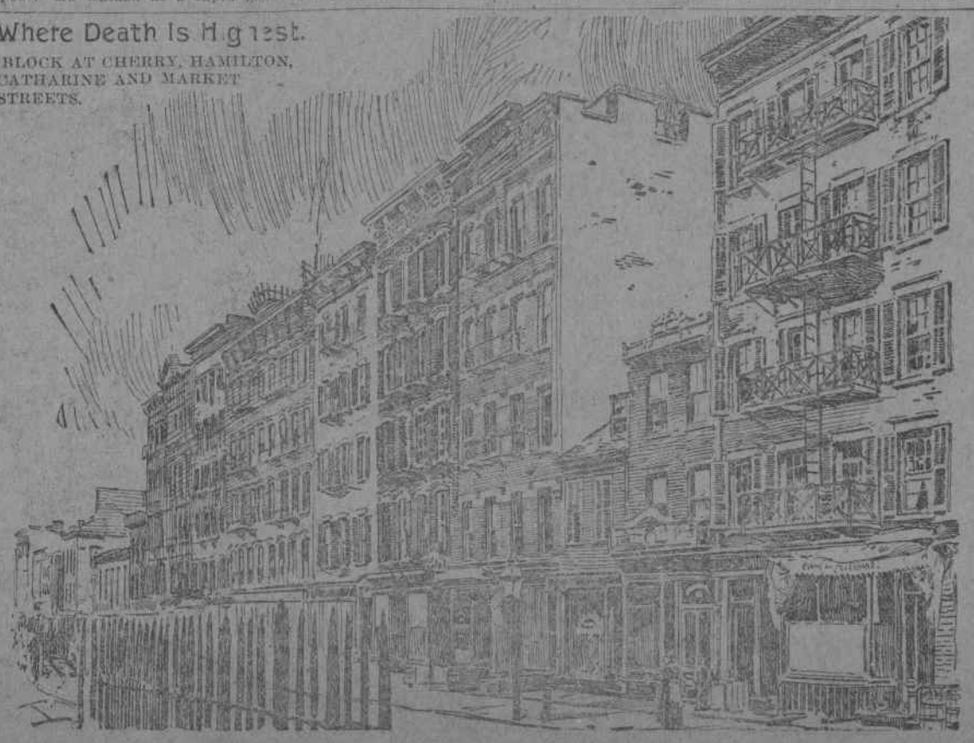
"He came out in a few minutes with another young man. They walked to Thorpe's Restaurant, at No. 19 Bowery; went in and ate a good supper. They came out at 8:55 p. m. and crossed over to the Atlantic Garden, where they sat down at table. Each drank two glasses of beer and smoked a cigar while listening to the music.

"They seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly, and remained until 9:30 p. m., when they went out, re-crossed the Bowery to the Windsor Pool Room, at No. 39. Here I left them at midnight playing pool with several other young fellows.

"Next morning I found the fellow again in his usual day disguise on the north side of Park Place, just west of Church street. I approached him and said: "Well, you are in pretty bad shape." "Yes," he said. I asked him if he was lame. He replied "Yes." I asked him the cause of his trouble and he answered, "Blood poisoning." He rolled back his left sleeve and exhibited a scar about the size of a half-dollar on his arm, below the elbow. I asked him where he lived. "I have no home," was his answer. "Do you know any one on Water street?" I asked. He appeared much surprised, but finally said he lived with a Mrs. Wood, at No. 344 Water street. His own name, he said, was Frank Schneider. He declared that he had been living in the hospital and wanted to get money to buy some second-hand underclothes.

Exactly What He Did, Where He Went and How He Disguised Himself to Beg---Told by the Report of a Detective Who Shadowed Him from Dawn to Dark.

Where Death Is Highest.
THE BLOCK AT CHERRY, HAMILTON, CATHARINE AND MARKET STREETS.



—HOW THEY MANAGE TO LIVE.

This was in February, 1896. For many months previous he had been laid off from time to time on account of the business depression, and when he was finally discharged for good the little fund that had been laid by for a rainy day had dwindled away until there was scarcely enough left for the support of the family for a month. The Watsons felt that there might be a long stretch of hard times ahead and husbanded their little hoard most carefully. But do what they would the money went, and soon they found themselves reduced to selling off some of the furniture they could best spare. Watson grew tired of looking for work at his trade, and scoured the city for any sort of a job. Now and then he found a day's work, first of one kind, then another, until now, instead of the cozy flat they had a year ago, they found themselves all cooped up in two rooms, small and dark and unhealthy. But they are glad even of this shelter, and, though their neighbors are almost as poor as themselves, they have found them more than willing to help out with a dish here and there when hunger pressed too strongly.

E. J. McGlucken was a watchmaker making good wages ten months ago. He, too, felt the pressure of hard times, and from steady work fell to half a week, then to an odd day now and then. There were three children, two boys and a girl, none of them over ten. They had to give up their home and finally found refuge in a furnished room, at $1.50 a week, at No. 103 King street. The snowfall, which brought such misery, saved McGlucken and his family from losing even this precarious shelter. He got a job from one of Colonel Waring's contractors shovelling snow, and the neighbors looked after Mrs. McGlucken, who added another mouth to the family table two weeks ago. When rations ran short, they were unostentatiously supplied by the other dwellers in the tenement.

Louis Steinhardt lives with his wife and three children at No. 208 East Ninth street. He worked for years faithfully as a driver, but the hard times threw him out of employment six months ago, and since then he has been unable to get anything to do. He has battled bravely against terrible odds, and puts on a brave front, he and his little flock, but there are times when he would certainly despair but for the friendly aid and cheer of his fellows, who are but little better off than he is himself.

And so the story runs with them all. Instances might be multiplied by the hundreds of thousands, but they would teach nothing new. The reporter called on Joseph A. Miller, of No. 1621 East End avenue, an assistant engineer, who has been out of employment for four months; George Drescher, a barber, of No. 44½ Gouverneur street, who has been idle two months, with a family of six on his hands; Ralph Bunning, a machinist, of No. 237 West Thirty-sixth street, idle for three months, with a wife and two children; John Hoolihan, a roofer, who has had nothing steady to do for ten months, though he has his wife and four children to look after, and half a dozen others.

They all fight the wolf steadily, step by step, always hoping, always brave, and patiently submitting to a gradual lopping off of what other people term "necessities," until they find themselves reduced in most cases to one bare room.

"Over 80 per cent of the working people of this city have not had steady employment during the past year," it was stated at the State Labor Bureau. "What that means almost any one can figure out."

Honest, self-respecting poverty is making a hard fight for life, but under such discouraging conditions the struggle is a peculiarly depressing one, for there is little prospect of relief in sight.

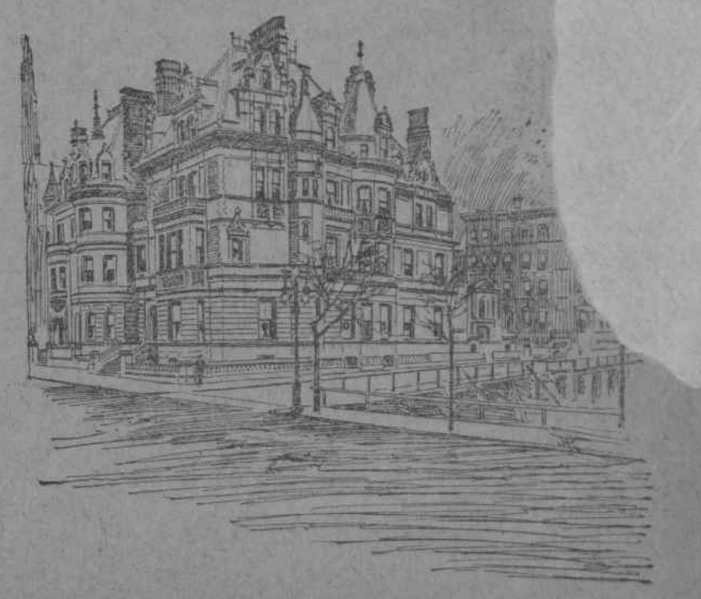
THE HOME OF MILLIONAIRES.

THE richest and the poorest block in New York make a fine study in contrasts. The one with a very much larger area contains 514 people whose aggregate wealth amounts to $400,000,000. The other, covering 25 per cent less ground space, shelters 3,358 persons, or six times as many as the richest block. And the aggregate wealth of these 3,358 persons is about $400,000, or one-thousandth part as great as the other. In the one each person represents on an average $800,000. The incomes on this, figured at 4 per cent, is $32,000 per annum for each man, woman and child in the block. In the other the average is about $100 a person, or an annual income of $4 figured on the same percentage. The difference is startling enough to satisfy anybody.

The richest block is that bounded by Fifty-third and Fifty-fourth streets and Fifth and Sixth avenues. The poorest is bounded by Second and Third streets and Avenues B and C. Within the limits of the Fifth avenue block live John D. Rockefeller, with his $200,000,000, and Dr. Seward Webb and H. McKay Twombly, representing between them $75,000,000 of the Vanderbilt hoard. Mr. Rockefeller's residence is at No. 4 West Fifty-fourth street, which is shown in the picture. The Twomblys and Webbs occupy the entire Fifth avenue front of the block with the exception of the space taken up by St. Thomas's Episcopal Church on the Fifty-third street corner. The Twombly house is on the Fifty-fourth street corner, and Dr. Webb is next to the church. Mr. and Mrs. George Crocker, of the great millionaire family of California, live at No. 18 West Fifty-fourth. Henry T. Sloane, another Vanderbilt connection, lives at No. 46 West Fifty-fourth, and the other residents on this street, many of them millionaires many times over, are H. M. Alexander, John J. McCook, William Bryce, Jr., William W. Skiddy, Edward La Montagne, John W. Aitken, the famous dry goods merchant; Isaac Seligman, O. D. Ashley, Jay Solomon, John R. Totten, William P. Parrish, John M. Fraser, Francis Koch, John F. Comey. And this list can be swelled up to many more of the same sort.

On the Fifty-third street front of the block lives the Rev. Dr. John Brown, rector of St. Thomas's, said to be the wealthiest clergyman in America; Theodore B. Starr, the millionaire jeweller, of Fifth avenue; Benjamin Stern, of the famous dry goods house; Julian L. Myers, Dr. Ramon Guteros, and a dozen or more other millionaires.

The 514 people in the block spend for living expenses in one week as much as the 3,358 in the East Side block spends in a year. Despite this fact, however, it is doubtful if the millionaires get as good a time out of life, on the whole, as do the East Siders. There they work hard and make little, but what little leisure they have they make the most of in a social way, leaving worries to take care of themselves. The East Side block is probably the most congested area in the world.



THE RICHEST BLOCK IN NEW YORK.
FIFTH AVENUE AND FIFTY-FOURTH STREET.